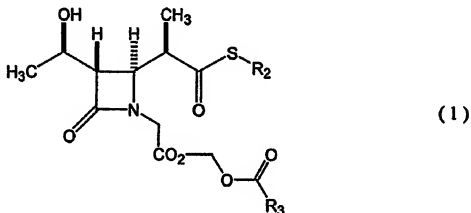


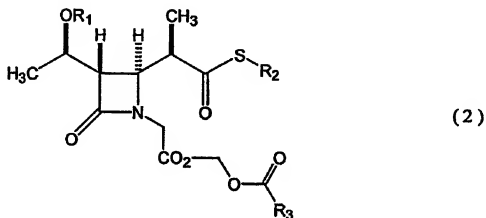
In the Claims:

Please amend Claims 7 and 15. Cancel Claims 11-13. A complete listing of the claims with proper claim identifiers is set forth below.

1. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a β -lactam compound comprising protecting the hydroxyl group of a compound represented by formula (1):



(wherein R_2 represents an aryl group or a heteroaryl group; and R_3 represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms), to produce a compound represented by formula (2):



(wherein R_1 represents a trimethylsilyl group or a triethylsilyl group; and R_2 and R_3 are the same as above); cyclizing the compound (2) in the presence of a strong base wherein the strong base is a base selected from the group consisting of an alkali metal alkoxide, an alkali